

Greetings from Commissioner Levin

Smart Growth focuses on revitalizing urban, suburban and rural areas, including the housing and business markets in these areas. With that in mind, we have created this Smart Growth Action Kit to provide you with an overview of the programs offered through the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA). These programs will preserve New Jersey’s neighborhoods by building homes where it makes sense and helping residents realize the dream of homeownership.

Smart Growth strikes a balance among new development, revitalization and economic demands. These programs demonstrate our commitment to achieving that balance by creating 20,000 homes for New Jersey’s working families, redeveloping neighborhoods, and investing in our downtowns and business districts.

DCA and HMFA assist developers, municipalities, consumers, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations that provide housing opportunities for and improvements to New Jersey’s neighborhoods. Every program shares the goals of Smart Growth and works to make each New Jersey community the best it can be.

Thank you for your interest. We hope that this Smart Growth Action Kit provides you with the tools you need to make Smart Growth a reality in your community.  
With all good wishes,

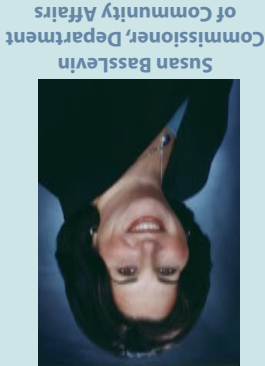
*Susan Bass Levin*  
Susan Bass Levin  
Commissioner



Jon S. Corzine  
Governor



Susan Bass Levin  
Commissioner, Department  
of Community Affairs



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Smart Growth Action Kit





At Home Downtown

>Where Everything is Waiting for You (HMFA)

Remember when you could rent an apartment above the local café? Now, thanks to HMFA's reduced-rate loan program, this can happen again. The At Home Downtown program restores housing units, reviving the mixed-use vitality of New Jersey's downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. First-floor shops provide opportunities for apartment living above, encouraging people to enjoy the benefits of downtown living. The At Home Downtown program brings it all together, where everything is waiting for you. For more information, call (609) 278-7617.

Neighborhood Revitalization State Tax Credits

>Building Corporate Community Partnerships (DCA)

The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Act, signed in January 2002, offers up to \$10 million in neighborhood revitalization tax credits in any fiscal year to businesses that partner with community-based organizations to revitalize New Jersey's communities. Through this partnership, these community-based organizations work on housing and economic development projects, reflecting community, nonprofit and corporate ideas for neighborhood revitalization. For more information, call (609) 633-6286.

City Living

>Have it All at Your Doorstep (HMFA)

New Jersey's cities have it all – art, entertainment, shopping, transportation, and places to live and work. Through the new City Living program, we are working to create or rehabilitate market-rate rental housing in designated urban neighborhoods to encourage residents to move back to New Jersey's cities. For more information, call (609) 278-7527.

Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits

>Developers Wanted (HMFA)

Now in its 18th year, this highly successful and competitive program awards millions of dollars in federal housing tax credits annually, giving developers the incentive they need to become involved. Every year, HMFA assists with the rehabilitation and construction of approximately 40 rental projects, and currently oversees over 400 tax credit developments that provide more than 24,000 homes. To learn more, call (609) 278-7577.

Home Buyer Mortgages

>Making the Dream of Homeownership a Reality (HMFA)

This program makes the dream of owning a house a reality by providing attractive mortgages to first-time homebuyers and urban homebuyers. A below-market, fixed interest rate is offered to these individuals, while down payments of as little as 0 percent are required. Additionally, loans are 30-year fixed rate. Many borrowers will also qualify for Smart Start downpayment / closing cost assistance. For more information, call 1-800-NJ-HOUSE.

Smart Start

>Closing Costs and Down Payment Available (HMFA)

Offers families purchasing homes in Smart Growth areas a second mortgage for down payment and/or closing costs. Borrowers earning up to 80% of HMFA's Home Buyer county income limits are eligible to receive 4% of the first mortgage amount. Is available only in conjunction with HMFA's Home Buyer Program mortgage loans. This program truly helps make the dream of owning your very own home a reality. Subject to funding availability. For more information, call 1-800-NJ-HOUSE.

Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing

>Building the New and Preserving the Old (DCA)

As time goes by, houses become more and more in need of rehabilitation and restoration. For instance, much of our state's existing affordable housing is decades old and in need of substantial repair and modernization. All over New Jersey, DCA creates affordable housing opportunities through the Balanced Housing program, which provides funding to buy and restore affordable housing units while keeping costs down for New Jersey's families. Through the program, developers and nonprofit organizations partner with communities to provide rental and homeownership opportunities for New Jersey's low- and moderate-income families. This year, approximatley \$50 million in Balanced Housing funds are available to municipalities to build and preserve new and existing homes. For more information, call (609) 633-6258.

Home Express

>Streaming the Application Process (HMFA)

The Home Express Program offers financing subsidies to developers of affordable rental housing in New Jersey under a streamlined application review process. Funded with Balanced Housing monies supplied by DCA, the program permits developers to apply for DCA Balanced Housing funding at the same time that they apply for low income housing tax credits and HMFA financing. This process eliminates the need to submit a separate application to DCA. For more information, call (609) 278-7527

Neighborhood Preservation

>Welcome to the Neighborhood! (DCA)

A great neighborhood reflects the hard work and dedication of its community members. From repairing facades to building front porches, the Neighborhood Preservation Program breathes new life into our communities by bringing together residents, elected officials, nonprofit organizations and local businesses interested in preserving and revitalizing their towns. Participating communities are provided with up to \$525,000 over five years to make needed improvements, particularly housing and infrastructure repairs, in designated "threatened but viable" neighborhoods. For more information, call (609) 292-6140.

Green Homes

>Energy Efficient Houses for the Environment (DCA)

Having a green thumb means having an extraordinary ability to make plants grow. Having a green home means having an extraordinary ability to run your house with the highest energy efficiency, quality and affordability. DCA's Green Homes program provides advocacy, education and technical assistance to developers to ensure the use of innovative, technologically advanced, environmentally friendly home construction designs. Incorporating "green" designs into home construction helps minimize a home's impact on the environment while decreasing utility costs, which makes owning a home affordable to more residents. For more information, call (609) 292-3931.

Close to Home New Jersey

>Cutting Your Commute (HMFA)

Wouldn't it be nice to reduce the time and money you spend getting to and from work, to have more time with your family and friends? Close to Home New Jersey provides incentives for residents to purchase homes close to work. Through various HMFA programs and services, Close to Home helps residents achieve the dream of homeownership by providing them with attractive mortgage loans, down payment assistance or funding for the closing costs on a new home. Qualified employees benefit from competitive mortgage rates, while participating municipalities and employers benefit from having a committed workforce living nearby. As part of the Close to Home initiative, the Live Where You Work program provides low-interest mortgage loans to individuals purchasing homes in towns where they are employed. Or, for individuals interested in moving closer to work but not necessarily in the same town, the Employer-Assisted Housing Program aims to encourage individuals to purchase homes within reasonable commuting distances to the workplace. Both programs promote Smart Growth by discouraging the use of cars, and by encouraging alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking and public transit. For more information, call 1-800-NJ-HOUSE.

Main Street New Jersey

>Revisit the Past (DCA)

Remember when shopping meant a trip downtown and you knew each storeowner by name? Our Main Street initiative makes that a reality again in small towns across the state – and soon in urban New Jersey. We provide the technical assistance so communities can make their business districts shine. Main Street New Jersey creates a sense of place where residents can live, work and shop in the comfort of a quaint downtown. For more information, call (609) 633-6266.

Market Oriented Neighborhood Investment

>MONI Makes the World Go 'Round (HMFA)

Quality communities in New Jersey should include people of all incomes. The Market Oriented Neighborhood Investment program (MONI) encourages economic diversity by helping developers and nonprofit housing sponsors construct housing that contains a mix of market-rate, moderate-income and low-income units. The program, which has funded approximately 800 units over the last two years, provides a portion of the construction financing, subsidies to write down the cost of construction, and access to below-market mortgages. It also gives eligible, first-time and urban homebuyers access to below-market mortgages. By focusing on homeownership, MONI stabilizes targeted neighborhoods and stimulates economic growth. For more information, call (609) 278-7617.

Brownfields Program

>The Ultimate Renewal Program (DCA)

Does your town have abandoned commercial or industrial buildings? Are they contaminated? Do you want to make them viable again? Then DCA's brownfields programs are for you. Led by the Brownfields Interagency Development Team (BRIT) and the Brownfields Redevelopment Task Force, this program provides one-stop shopping for your brownfields projects. The Governor has called together more than 20 state departments and agencies to provide the resources to make brownfields redevelopment as easy as possible. The brownfields programs enable old, abandoned areas to become new again through remediation and redevelopment. For more information, call (609) 292-3096.

Special Improvement Districts

>Making Traditional Downtowns Competitive (DCA)

Imagine the convenience of walking store-to-store in your local neighborhood, rather than driving to a huge mall. Knowing that, DCA helps towns make investments in New Jersey's traditional downtowns. These investments include everything from putting in new sidewalks and improving building facades and security, to creating marketing and promotional campaigns to attract visitors. This innovative program helps downtown property owners and merchants partner to form local management associations with the authority to collect assessments and set management strategies. Through a municipal ordinance, Special Improvement Districts are formed and DCA helps manage and facilitate the improvements needed to make our downtowns more competitive. For more information, call (609) 633-6286.

Redevelopment Area Bond Financing Law and Revenue Allocation District Financing Act

>Finding Funds for Redevelopment Just Got Easier (DCA)

It is easy to recognize when an area needs redevelopment, but finding the funds to do the work is usually challenging. It just got easier. New legislation allows a municipality with a designated redevelopment area to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance a variety of redevelopment projects. Revenue Allocation District Financing allows future monies generated by the project to be used to pay for infrastructure and other project development costs. This financing mechanism was used successfully to complete the Jersey Gardens Mall in Elizabeth. For more information, call (609) 292-7842.

Rehabilitation Subcode

>Making Renovations Easier (DCA)

New Jersey leads the country and is a model for revitalization through the Rehabilitation Subcode, which is written expressly for existing buildings. This innovative Subcode moves away from using new construction codes as the measure for existing buildings, making revitalization cheaper and easier. This flexible, common-sense approach helped spark a dramatic rise in rehabilitation work in New Jersey's largest cities and earned New Jersey an Innovations in American Government Award in 1999 and a grant from the Ford Foundation. For more information, call (609) 984-7609.

Small Rental Project Preservation Loan

>Fighting Sprawl with Rentals (HMFA)

Do you remember the feeling you had when you got your first apartment? This program can give that feeling back to middle-income families by preserving affordability and availability of rental housing. The Small Rental Project Preservation Loan Program provides construction, permanent and subsidy financing to qualified nonprofit and for-profit housing developers. These loans may be used for refinancing, acquisition and rehabilitation of existing, housing projects or the funding of new construction projects. Projects must be between 5 and 25 units. For more information, call (609) 278-7527.

Smart Future Planning Grants

>Improving New Jersey One Region at a Time (DCA)

Roads and water lines do not stop at municipal boundaries, so revitalization planning strategies shouldn't either. Planning for a smart future takes the cooperation of many towns and counties that share a common vision for growth. Smart Future provides money for counties and municipalities to complete studies and create 'smart' revitalization plans. It also provides county and municipal planners access to state experts from DCA, DEP and DOT, as well as the funds to work with consultants with specialized expertise. For more information, call (609) 292-7156.

